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Fairfax, VA 22030
August 10, 2001

Ms. Kimberly Topper
Food and Drug Administration, CDER
Advisors and Consultants Staff, HFD-21
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Topper,

I would like to make my views known concerning the use of opiates as analgesics.

I am a 50-year-old housewife and mother. I am active in my neighborhood civic association and my church. I have a college degree. I help my husband with the business we began in 1985, a medium-sized chain of exercise equipment stores called "Fitness Resource."

In March of 1999, a chiropractor broke my sternum. Now, almost 30 months later, it still is not healed and hurts enormously.

I began using Oxycontin and Oxy IR after 18 months of debilitating pain. The pain was so intense and persistent that I was able to get out of bed only two or three days a week, and those days were with much strain and difficulty. The pain caused me to vomit as many as 25 times a week. Other pain medications did not work very well and had terrible side affects--the anti-inflammatory group, even the newest and best ones, gave me horrible stomach aches and did not stop the pain. The others, such as Ultram, made me extremely dizzy and totally wiped out my short term memory. Life hardly seemed worth living.

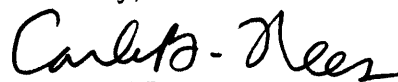
I was accepted into Dr. Howard Heit's care only after more than a year of pain, with a letter from my general practitioner, Dr. Richard Chen. I have now been using Oxycontin since November of 2000. My pain has decreased greatly, so much so that it is only rarely that a bad pain day keeps me in bed. I have experienced virtually no side affects aside from mild constipation from time to time.

I take my medication exactly as prescribed. I keep it in a safe place and do not discuss its use outside of my family and with my doctors.

Without Oxycontin, I could not have my life as a wife, mother, and citizen of my community. I would be confined to bed and would be seriously depressed. Currently, I am investigating the possibility of a surgical procedure to relieve the pain so that I can reduce or even discontinue the use of Oxycontin; but until such time as that happens, assuming it will be successful, I am grateful to have about 85% of my quality of life restored.

I am a responsible, contributing member of our society. Please do not punish me because of the abuse by others of this life-giving medication. Dr. Heit is vigorous in his demand for absolute accountability by his patients for their medications. Oxycontin and other opioids need not constitute a danger when they are administered and used responsibly. The fact that it could be removed because of abuse by a small minority of doctors and lay people is unconscionable for those of us who have been given back our lives. Please do not remove it because of those few. Far greater are the number of cases where it is used responsibly and is a life-giver.

Sincerely,


Carla B. Nees